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The President's Daily Brief

20 March 1971

49

~~*Top Secret*~~ 50X1

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

20 March 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

On *Page 1* we comment on the draft ABM agreement which Semenov tabled at yesterday's SALT session.

The first Soviet military airlift to Egypt this year is under way. *(Page 2)*

Cairo yesterday made its first public claim of a shooting incident in the Suez Canal area since last August. *(Page 3)*

In Turkey, Nihat Erim, a moderate, is forming an interim government while the radical left shifts its activities to Istanbul. *(Page 4)*

On *Page 5* we review the military situation in northern Laos.

Chinese

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(Page 6)

The Italian police have rounded up right-wing conspirators in a move to quiet criticism from the left. *(Page 7)*

North Korea

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(Page 8)

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SALT

At yesterday's plenary, Semenov tabled a "Draft Treaty on the Limitation of Deployment of ABM Systems." He took the familiar line that an early ABM-only agreement as a "first step" would create better conditions for solving problems related to limiting offensive weapons.

The Soviet draft is essentially a rehash of the "basic provisions" tabled last December, but contains additional specific details. These include provisions for a numerical limitation of 100 ABM launchers/interceptors within a 200-kilometer radius of Moscow and Washington. The draft treaty seems deliberately patterned on the US proposal set forth in Option E, and the new specifics are clearly aimed at making the Soviet provisions appear responsive to repeated US requests for further detail. There are still, however, two significant differences: Moscow's failure to limit the number of ABM radars within the permitted zone and its failure to ban the upgrading of SAMs.

The Soviets probably believe that tabling a draft treaty at this time has tactical advantages. In making a detailed proposal, they seem intent on trying to throw the ball back into the US court. Moscow may hope in so doing to give Washington something to ponder during Semenov's absence during the Soviet party congress.

The Soviets seem to feel that their stand on forward-based systems gives them a plausible argument for creating a stalemate on the offensive side, while they focus on ABM limits. Semenov's new push for discussion of ABMs, however, does not rule out concurrent discussions in Vienna on limiting offensive weapons. During the post-plenary discussions, a Soviet adviser commented that both offensive and defensive limits could still be discussed.

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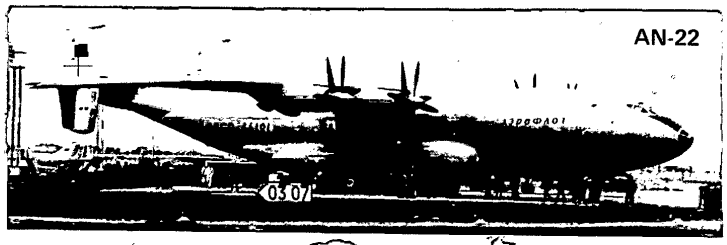
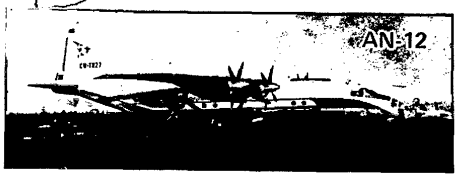
Soviet Airlift to Egypt





	AN-12	AN-22
Length	109 ft	186 ft
Payload with full fuel	9,500-18,400 lbs*	99,000 lbs
Range	2,200-3,800 nm*	5,100 nm
Cargo compartment	10ftX8ftX44ft	14ftX14ftX88ft

These figures vary depending on the model flown.

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USSR-EGYPT

The first Soviet military airlift to Egypt this year is now under way. Since early this month, 13 Soviet AN-12 and three AN-22 military transports have arrived in Cairo; [redacted]

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Between February and April of last year about 45 MIG-21 jet interceptors, which were subsequently piloted by Soviet personnel, were airlifted to Egypt. In late July another airlift occurred in which replacement aircraft for four Soviet-piloted MIG-21s lost in aerial combat were delivered. There is no evidence that MIGs are included in the present airlift, but we cannot rule out the possibility that the cargo includes replacements for two Soviet-piloted MIGs that recently crashed.

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EGYPT-ISRAEL

Cairo radio yesterday made the first public claim of a shooting incident in the Suez Canal area since last August. It alleged that Egyptian anti-aircraft guns had fired on two Israeli Phantom jets over Port Fuad at the northern end of the canal.

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Cairo's purpose in making the claim may have been to underscore the fragility of the current de facto cease-fire and to give added emphasis to international peace efforts. In an apparent effort to convey the impression of Egyptian readiness for renewed conflict, Cairo radio in recent days has reported preparations by President Sadat and various military commanders for a meeting today of the "Committee for Preparing the State for War."

Aside from the fairly regular reconnaissance by both Egyptian and Israeli aircraft, and the increased state of alert in effect since the cease-fire expired on 7 March, no unusual military activity has been detected in recent weeks on either side of the canal. Away from the immediate canal area in Egypt, regular training and defensive measures have continued but there is no evidence of preparations for offensive military action.

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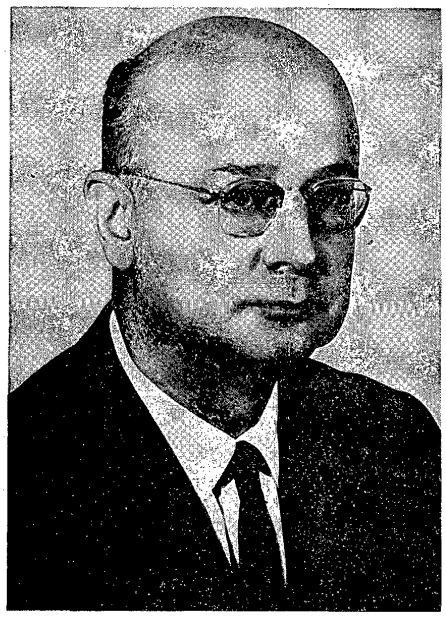

Nihat Erim, Turkey's new prime minister - designate, a political moderate and an outstanding legal authority, appears to be a reasonably good choice to head the government during this troubled period. He has had wide experience in both domestic and foreign affairs and in balancing divergent political forces. Reformist in outlook, Erim is also one of Turkey's foremost authorities on the thorny Cyprus problem.

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TURKEY

The new government to be formed by Nihat Erim during the next few days will be composed largely of representatives of the four largest political parties and perhaps some independents from the Senate. Neither former prime minister Demirel as head of the Justice Party nor Ismet Inonu, the head of the Republican Peoples Party, is expected to participate.

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Under the constitution, an interim or provisional government is not subject to a vote of confidence. Erim's mandate, however, appears to be somewhat broader than normal for such a government. The question of new elections is yet to be resolved but there have been suggestions that they may be held next October.

With some degree of normalcy returning to Ankara, the radical left, which has been responsible for most of the recent unrest, is now shifting the focus of its activities to Istanbul.

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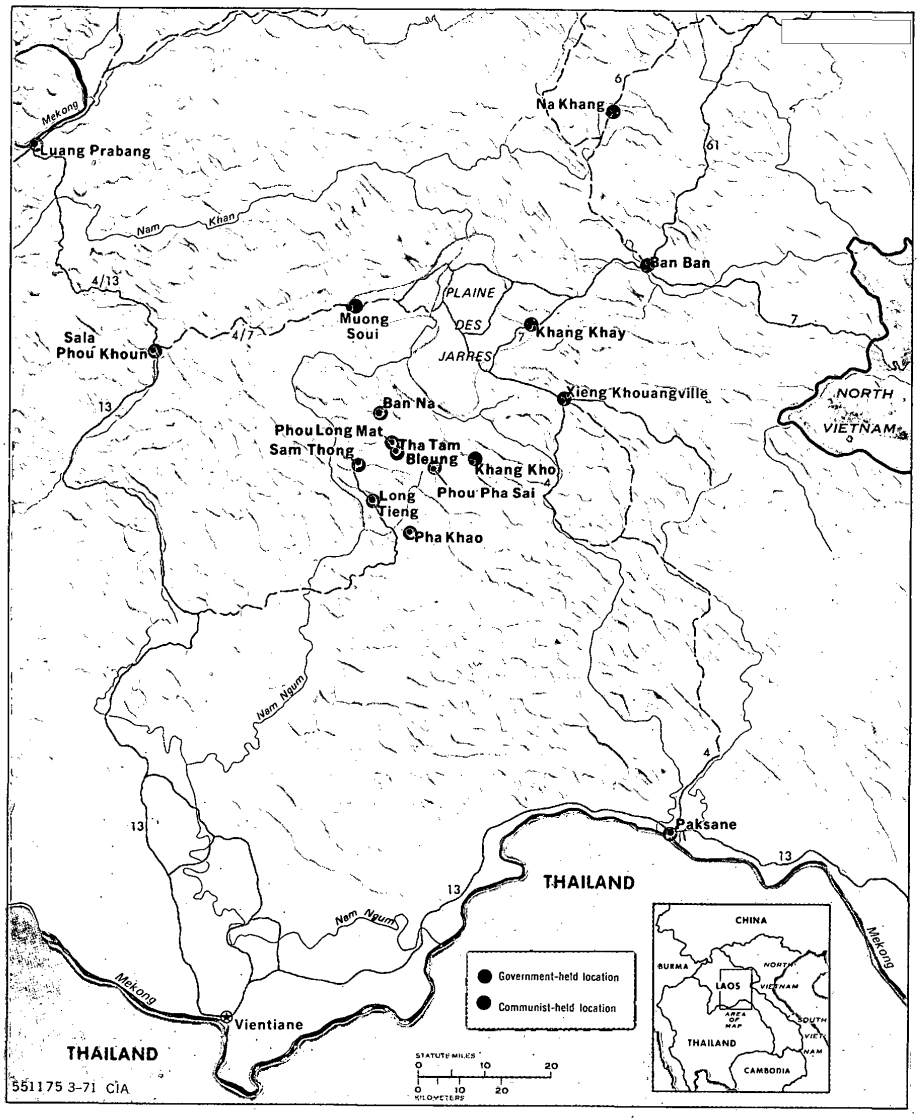

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LAOS

The Communist offensive west of the Plaine des Jarres--now nearly two months old--has yet to make any major gains. Over 10,000 North Vietnamese troops still surround government positions at Ban Na, Phou Long Mat, and Phou Pha Sai, and they continue to harass the main complex at Long Tieng on a regular basis. No important positions have changed hands, however.

Since their damaging sapper attack on Long Tieng in mid-February the North Vietnamese have apparently concentrated on resupplying and repositioning their units, and have generally avoided large-scale ground assaults against fortified positions. Intercepted messages suggest that the Communists have suffered substantial casualties from air strikes and government artillery bombardments and that they continue to have supply problems. The government, meanwhile, has significantly reinforced the Long Tieng region. Aggressive patrolling in recent weeks has helped to keep the Communists off balance. Over 10,000 irregular combat forces are now in the area.

Although the North Vietnamese offensive has lost some of its momentum, there is no evidence that the enemy is disengaging. Only about two months of good weather remain, however. If the Communists are determined to take Long Tieng, they should begin to press harder soon.

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COMMUNIST CHINA

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ITALY

Nationwide police raids last week against right-wing conspirators are now being sensationally played up in the Italian press. The primary targets were the leaders of the neo-Fascist National Front [redacted] 50X1

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Allegedly the culmination of investigations begun when the National Front made a ludicrously half-hearted and closely monitored move last December, the raids were in fact timed to quiet criticism from the left about government inaction rather than to quell any genuine right-wing threat. The government may now find itself under pressure to take some balancing action in order to appease those already complaining that the real danger to Italy comes from the left and not from the "insignificant right."

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NOTES

North Korea

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Pakistan: President Yahya Khan and Mujibur Rahman continued their talks today, despite several deaths yesterday in what appears to have been the most serious clash involving the army in almost two weeks. Mujib again took a tough stance on Thursday when he rejected Yahya's proposal to conduct an investigation of killings earlier this month, partly because the probe was to have been held under martial law. At the same time the refusal of Z. A. Bhutto to join the talks in Dacca, at least for the time being, underlines the pressures against making concessions which West Pakistani politicians and military are bringing to bear on Yahya.

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